

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

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TO USDEL SECRETARY AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATE

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WTE-1 FOR USDEL SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.), SOPN

SUBJECT: BURT ARTICLE IN NYTIMES ON NUCLEAR MATERIALS BAN

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF BURT PIECE, FOLLOWED BY GUIDANCE PREPARED BY PM AND EXTRACT FROM MONDAY DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING AT WHICH QUESTIONS AROSE.

2. BEGIN TEXT: IN A MOVE THAT HAS PROVOKED FURIOUS CRITICISM FROM THE PENTAGON, SECSTATE CYRUS R. VANCE HAS ASKED PRESIDENT CARTER TO EXPEDITE A PROPOSAL BY THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY CALLING FOR AN INTERNATIONAL BAN ON THE PRODUCTION OF MATERIAL USED IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

3. ACCORDING TO STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, MR. VANCE, IN A LETTER TO THE WHITE HOUSE, ASKED THAT A TEAM BE ASSEMBLED
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IN COMING WEEKS THAT WOULD EXAMINE HOW TO CARRY OUT A PROPOSAL THAT NATIONS THAT NOW HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CEASE PRODUCTION OF PLUTONIUM AND ENRICHED URANIUM FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

4. DEFENSE OFFICIALS SAID THAT MR. VANCE'S LETTER HAD ANGERED PENTAGON OFFICIALS, WITH SECDEF HAROLD BROWN CONTENDING THAT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONSULTED ON THE MATTER.

5. A BAN ON PRODUCTION OF SUCH MATERIALS WOULD NOT PREVENT

NUCLEAR POWERS FROM BUILDING NEW WEAPONS, BUT IT WOULD FORCE THEM TO USE MATERIALS TAKEN FROM EXISTING WEAPONS. IN THIS WAY, ARMS CONTROL OFFICIALS ARGUE, A CEILING COULD BE PLACED ON THE FUTURE SIZE OF NUCLEAR STOCKPILES.

6. OFFICIALS SAID THE PLAN, TOGETHER WITH MR. VANCE'S LETTER, ORIGINATED IN THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY. SPECIALISTS THERE ARE SAID TO HOPE THAT IT WILL WIN QUICK PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL SO THAT IT CAN BE UNVEILED AT THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT THAT IS SCHEDULED FOR LATE MAY.

7. IN HIS LETTER, MR. VANCE SAID THE PROPOSED BAN ON PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS WOULD SERVE THE "PRIMARY REQUIREMENT" OF HALTING THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND WOULD ALSO BE CONSISTENT WITH OTHER DISARMAMENT INITIATIVES SUCH AS SOVIET-AMERICAN EFFORTS TO LIMIT STRATEGIC ARMS AND BAN ALL NUCLEAR TESTING.

8. HOWEVER, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE PLAN AND ITS OFFICIALS ARE UPSET THAT THEY ONLY LEARNED OF THE VANCE LETTER AFTER IT HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

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9. IN A LETTER FRIDAY TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISER ON NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, MR. BROWN COMPLAINED THAT THE PENTAGON HAD BEEN IGNORED IN FASHIONING THE PROPOSAL AND THAT THE VANCE LETTER SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SENT TO MR. CARTER BEFORE THE VIEWS OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS WERE SOUGHT.

10. "THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF SHARES THIS VIEW", MR. BROWN SAID IN HIS LETTER. OFFICIALS SAID THAT IN HIS LETTER, MR. BROWN ARGUED THAT THE IDEA OF A NUCLEAR PRODUCTION BAN HAD BEEN FIRST FORMULATED WHEN THE UNITED STATES POSSESSED NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY OVER THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT IT WAS NO LONGER RELEVANT IN THE PRESENT ERA OF "STRATEGIC EQUIVALENCE".

11. IN ADDITION, MR. BROWN IS SAID TO CONTEND THAT IF THE UNITED STATES FAILS TO ACHIEVE A NEW STRATEGIC ARMS AGREEMENT WITH MOSCOW, IT MIGHT THEN HAVE AN INCREASED REQUIREMENT FOR NEW NUCLEAR MATERIALS.

12. FINALLY, MR. BROWN'S LETTER IS SAID TO ARGUE THAT THE PROBLEMS OF POLICING A NUCLEAR PRODUCTION BAN WOULD BE OVERWHELMING".

13. OFFICIALS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT EXPRESSED SURPRISE OVER MR. BROWN'S RESPONSE AND SAID NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO

BYPASS THE PENTAGON. THEY ALSO SAID THAT IN PASSING ON THE ARMS CONTROL AGENCY'S PLAN TO THE WHITE HOUSE, MR. VANCE RECOGNIZED THAT IT "HAD CERTAIN PROBLEMS".

14. THE IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT TO END PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS DATES BACK TO 1955, WHEN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER PROPOSED IT TO MOSCOW. AT THE TIME, THE UNITED STATES POSSESSED A LARGE EDGE IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IN 1964, PRESIDENT JOHNSON ANNOUNCED A UNILATERAL 25 PER-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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CENT CUT IN THE PRODUCTION OF ENRICHED URANIUM FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND A YEAR LATER, THE UNITED STATES AGAIN PROPOSED A JOINT BAN ON PRODUCTION. NOTHING CAME OF EITHER PROPOSAL.

15. OFFICIALS SAID A MAJOR EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE TO LESSEN THE APPEARANCE OF DISCRIMINATION IN EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES TO PREVENT NON-NUCLEAR POWERS FROM ACQUIRING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM OR ENRICHED URANIUM THAT COULD BE USED IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. A MAJOR COMPLAINT OF SOME NATIONS, SUCH AS INDIA, THAT DO NOT YET POSSESS NUCLEAR WEAPONS IS THAT WHILE THE UNITED STATES OPPOSES THEIR PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, IT CONTINUES TO DO SO ITSELF.

16. THEREFORE, ARMS CONTROL OFFICIALS ARGUE, A PRODUCTION BAN WOULD ELIMINATE ONE OF THE MOST OBJECTIONABLE ASPECTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. REFLECTING THIS VIEW, MR. VANCE'S LETTER SAYS HIS PROPOSAL "DIRECTLY ADDRESSES CONCERNS EXPRESSED" BY PRIME MINISTER MORARJI R. DESAI OF INDIA, "AND HENCE WOULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS" FOR INDIAN ACCEPTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION OF ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES.

17. MR. VANCE SUGGESTED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY IN VIENNA COULD BE ASSIGNED THE TASK OF VERIFYING THAT PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS FOR WEAPONS HAD BEEN HALTED. END TEXT OF ARTICLE.

18. GUIDANCE PREPARED BY PM:

Q. DOES VANCE REALLY FAVOR A CUT-OFF OF FISSIONABLE MATERIALS?

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A. THE ARTICLE IN QUESTION WAS MISLEADING. ALL SECRETARY VANCE REQUESTED WAS THE COMMISSIONING OF AN INTERAGENCY

STUDY. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE GOOD ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES.

Q. BUT WHAT IS HIS PERSONAL VIEW?

A. THE SECRETARY THINKS THAT THIS COULD BE A GOOD IDEA, BUT HE WOULD NATURALLY AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY. HE HAS NOT MADE UP HIS MIND.

Q. WHY DID HE BY-PASS THE PENTAGON?

A. THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT TO BYPASS THE PENTAGON. THE INTER-AGENCY STUDY PROPOSED BY THE SECRETARY WOULD INVOLVE ALL AGENCIES INCLUDING DOD AND JCS. ALL AGENCIES WOULD BE INVOLVED IN ARRIVING AT THE FINAL RECOMMENDATION TO THE PRESIDENT. END GUIDANCE TEXT.

19. BEGIN TEXT OF PRESS BRIEFING EXTRACT:

Q. TOM, ARE YOU BRIEFED AT ALL ON THE REPORTED DISPUTE BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PENTAGON--NAMELY, SECRETARY BROWN--CONCERNING A PROPOSAL BY SECRETARY VANCE TO THE WHITE HOUSE TO BAN A PRODUCTION MATERIAL USED IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS? (SIC).

A. ALL SECRETARY VANCE REQUESTED WAS THE COMMISSIONING OF AN INTERAGENCY STUDY. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE GOOD ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION. THE SECRETARY THINKS THAT THIS COULD BE A GOOD IDEA, BUT HE WOULD NATURALLY AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY. HE HAS NOT MADE UP HIS MIND. NOW, LET ME SAY THAT THE INTERAGENCY STUDY PROPOSED BY SECRETARY VANCE WOULD INVOLVE ALL AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE JOINT CHIEFS
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OF STAFF. ALL AGENCIES WOULD BE INVOLVED IN ARRIVING AT THE FINAL RECOMMENDATION TO THE PRESIDENT.

Q. ALL RIGHT. NOW THE POINT IS: WAS THIS LETTER SENT WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, AND IS THAT CONTRARY TO PROCEDURE? A GREAT POINT HAS BEEN MADE OF THE CLOSENESS OF SECRETARY VANCE AND SECRETARY BROWN IN CONSIDERING MANY ISSUES. IS THIS AN ABERRATION OR IS THERE SOME FUNDAMENTAL REASON HERE FOR THIS DIFFERENCE?

A. I KNOW THAT SECRETARY VANCE AND SECRETARY BROWN CONSULT QUITE FREQUENTLY, AND AS TO WHAT THE NORMAL PROCEDURES ARE I'M JUST NOT SURE. BUT THERE IS NO ATTEMPT TO CUT THE PENTAGON OUT OF THIS. IN FACT, THE PENTAGON WILL BE A MEMBER. IF THE PRESIDENT AGREES THAT AN INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE SHOULD BE SET UP TO STUDY THIS QUESTION, THE PENTA-

GON WOULD BE ON THAT TASK FORCE, ACCORDING TO THE RECOMMENDATION WHICH SECRETARY VANCE MADE.

Q. THE STORY IN THE TIMES SAYS THAT BROWN WROTE TO BRZEZINSKI ON FRIDAY PROTESTING THAT THE PENTAGON HAD BEEN IGNORED IN FASHIONING THE PROPOSAL AND THAT THE VANCE LETTER SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THE VIEWS OF THE DEFENSE OFFICIALS WERE SOUGHT. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY RESPONSE TO THAT?

A. NO, I HAVE NO RESPONSE TO THAT, BUT I'M SURE THAT NOW THEY ARE BEING CONSULTED ABOUT THE PROPOSAL. I DON'T THINK THERE WAS ANY TRICKSTERISM INVOLVED HERE.

Q. WERE THEY CONSULTED BEFORE THE--

Q. WHERE DID THE PROPOSAL ORIGINATE?
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A. I'D HAVE TO CHECK THAT. THE ARTICLE THIS MORNING SAID THAT IT ORIGINATED AT THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY, BUT I'D HAVE TO CHECK THAT FOR YOU.

Q. WELL, I'M TRYING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS SIMPLY PASSING ON A PROPOSAL HERE OR WHETHER THE STATE DEPARTMENT ITSELF IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN IT.

A. WELL, LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT ABOUT THAT. I DON'T KNOW THE NATURE OF OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH IT.

Q. WAS THE PENTAGON CONSULTED IN THE FORMULATION OF THE PROPOSAL?

A. THE PENTAGON SAYS THAT IT WAS NOT.

Q. YES, BUT I WONDERED WHAT YOU SAID.

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON IT. END BRIEFING TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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